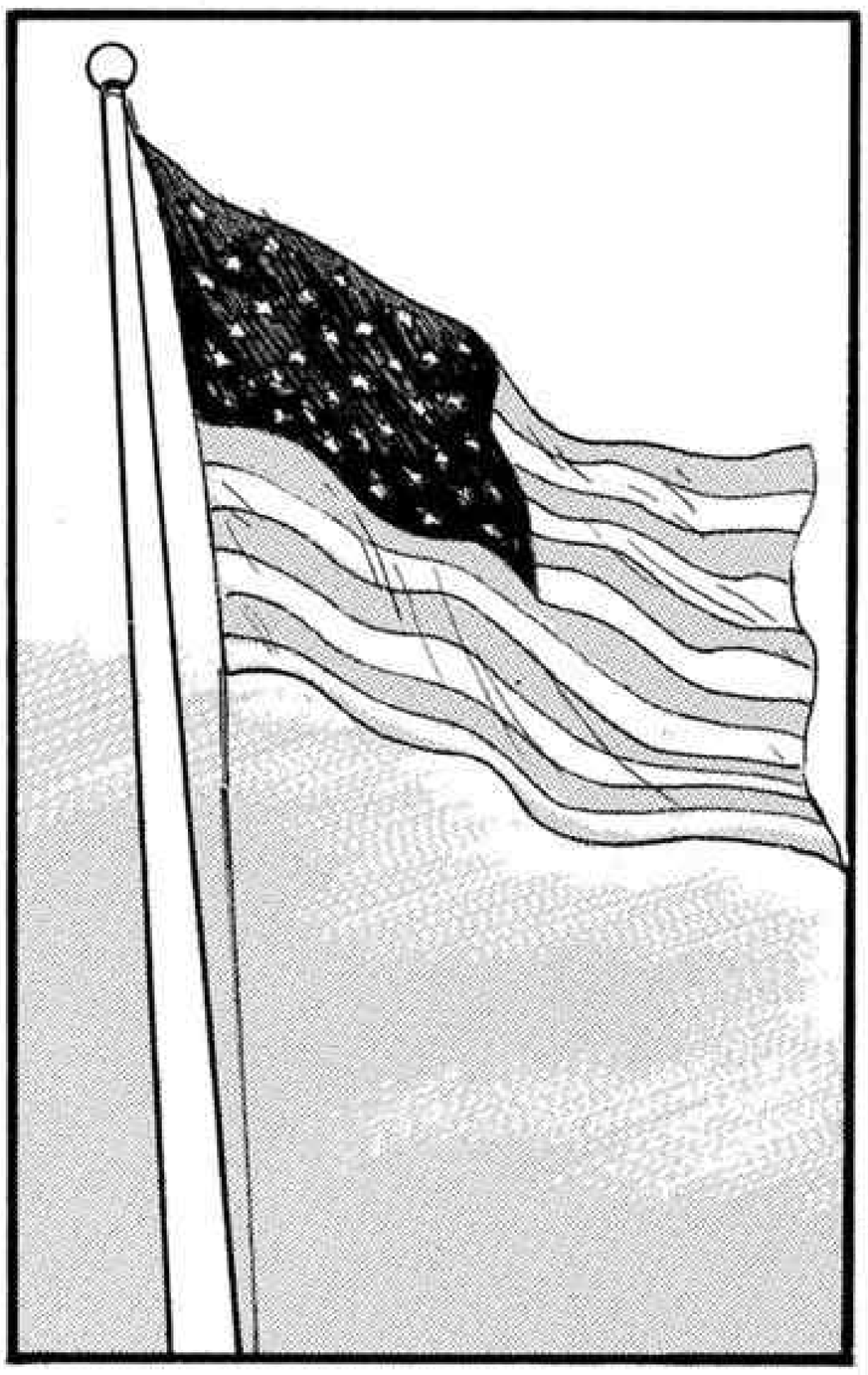
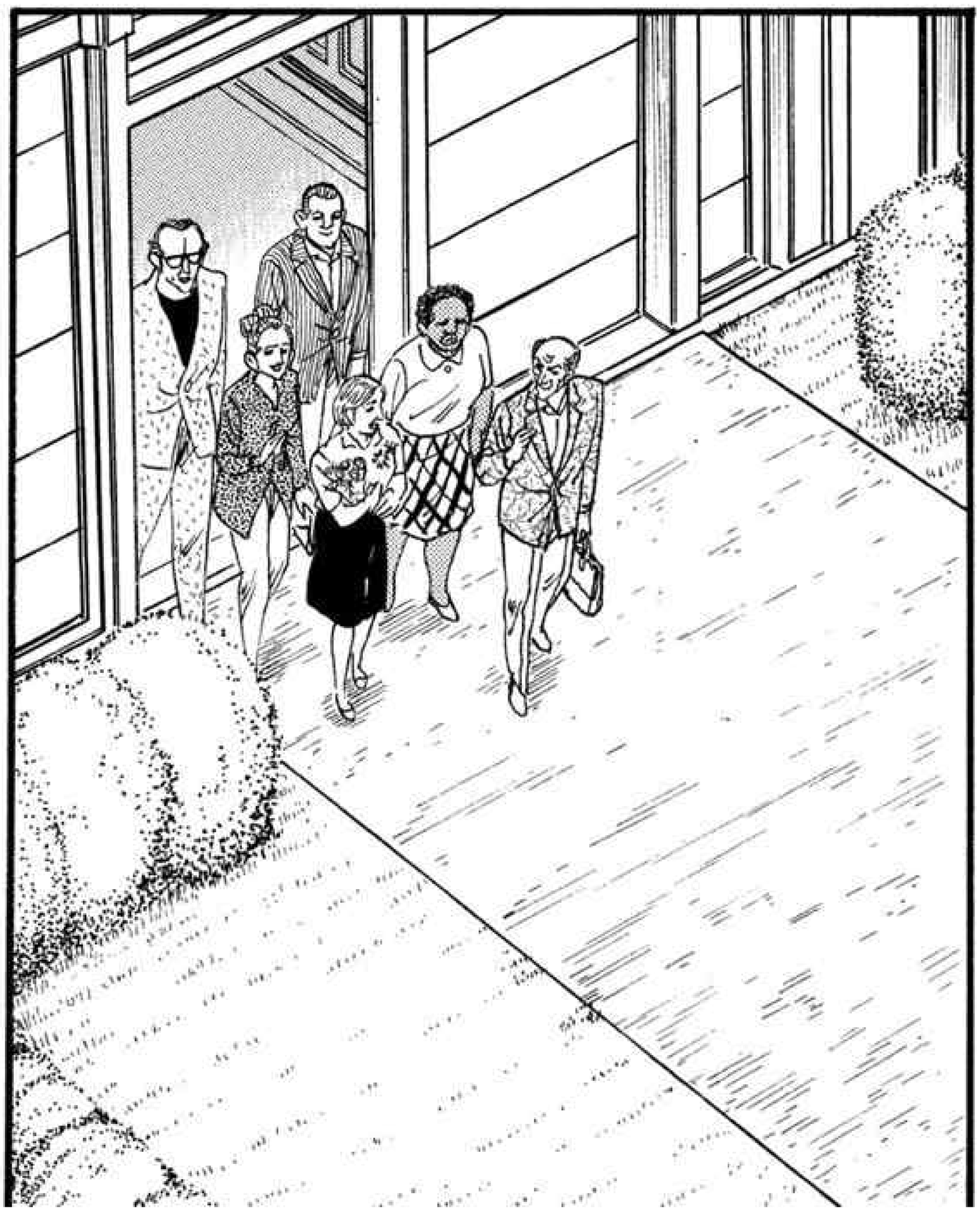
Washington, D.C., The White House

September 1st, 2000





FLASHBACK

...IT'S NOT EASY TO LEAVE YOU ALL BEHIND.
OH, THANK YOU, MRS. MCCORMICK.
IT'S GOING TO BE LONELY HERE WITHOUT YOU, MR. BERKELEY...
Y-YOU TAKE CARE, MR. BERKELEY!
DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL GET *PLENTY* OF LETTERS FROM FLORIDA!
BUT BETWEEN THE WASHINGTON SUMMERS AND THE WINTERS, THESE OLD BONES ARE STARTING TO WARP!
YES...
THINGS ARE GOING TO BE HARD FOR A WHILE.
HE'S BEEN TRAINING ME FOR MONTHS, BUT I'M STILL BARELY UP TO SPEED ON REPLACING HIM...

THEY CALL HIM A LIVING ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE WHITE HOUSE...I OFTEN THINK HE'S THE ONE THOSE HISTORIANS SHOULD TALK TO...BUT HE DOESN'T SO MUCH AS GOSSIP...A MAN OF DISCRETION.

MY GRANDFATHER KNEW EDWARD BERKELEY WHEN HE FIRST JOINED THE GARDENING STAFF IN 1960...HE'S BEEN HEAD GROUNDSKEEPER HERE SINCE THE '70s.

HE'S A FINE OLD GENTLEMAN, MR. BERKELEY...

?

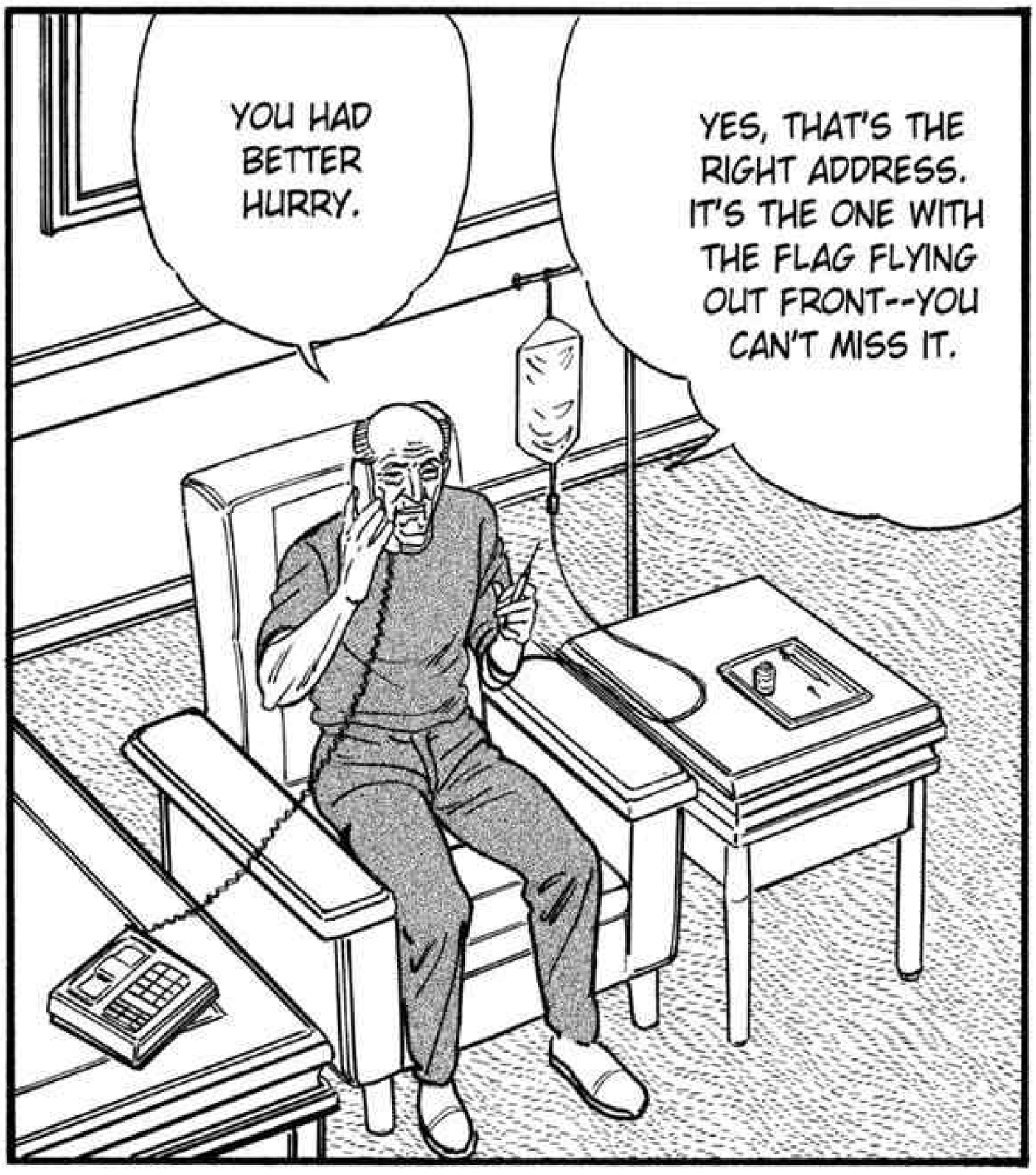
TAKIN' OFF ALREADY? CAN I AT LEAST SHAKE YOUR HAND GOODBYE?

HEY, *ED!*

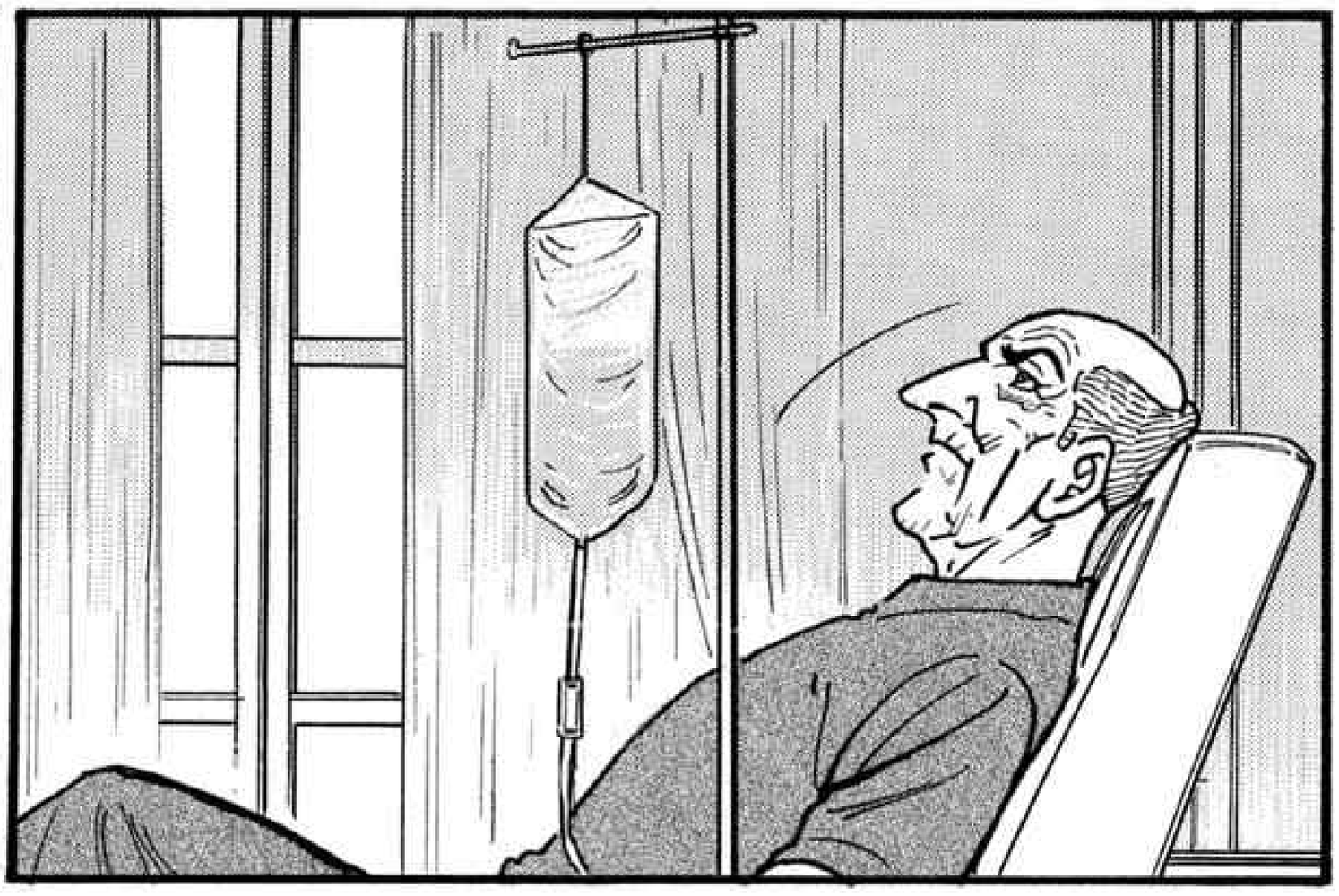
THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT.

November 11, 2000 - 2:07 P.M.

CHAK


YOU HAD BETTER HURRY.
YES, THAT'S THE RIGHT ADDRESS. IT'S THE ONE WITH THE FLAG FLYING OUT FRONT--YOU CAN'T MISS IT.

...JUST LIKE THIS STEADY DRIP.
THE TAPE RECORDER'S ALREADY RIGGED...THE WHOLE THING IS SIMPLE AND FOOLPROOF...



AND YOU MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE...

AH...

SHIP

UHH...
AHHHH!

tmptmmppp

GIVE ME YOUR ARM.

...WHAT ?

I NEED TO HEAR YOUR PROPOSITION CLEARLY.

IT'S FOR MY BENEFIT AS WELL.

TH-THANK YOU...THE PAIN'S GOTTEN PRETTY BAD.

.....

...THE DOCTORS TOLD ME SOMETHING A BIT DIFFERENT.

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU OFTEN MEET YOUR...CLIENTS IN THE SUBURBS, DO YOU? I'M SORRY...IN MY CONDITION, I CAN'T REALLY GO OUT. I'D HOPED TO ENJOY A FEW YEARS IN THIS HOUSE, BUT...

STATE YOUR BUSI-NESS...

...MR. TOGO.

TH-THANK YOU FOR COMING...

.....

YOU MAY FIND MY REQUEST UNREASONABLE.

……

Jooo

...BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I COULD ASK TO ATTEMPT THIS.

EVEN IF YOU SUCCEED, YOU MAY FIND THAT YOUR SUCCESS HAS MADE YOU A TARGET. YOU'RE EXPOSING YOURSELF TO THE WRATH OF AN ENTIRE NATION...

……

...I TAKE ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS CONSEQUENCES.

IF I ACCEPT A JOB, I MAKE IT MY BUSINESS TO FULFILL IT. AND PROVIDED THE CLIENT WAS HONEST TO ME...

WEEE

December 16, 2000

...I DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO VOTE. YEAH, I TOLD MYSELF THE USUAL...THAT ONE VOTE EITHER WAY DOESN'T MATTER...

DON'T REMIND ME...

H-HOW ABOUT THAT ELECTION... HUH...? SEEMS LIKE PRE...PRETTY BAD DAYS IN AMERICA.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN ...?

WANNA HEAR TH...THE TRUTH?

ONE VOTE... M-MAYBE NOT...TWO HUNDRED VOTES... TH-THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.

TH...THAT MEANT RIDING HERD ON A LOT OF LAWYERS...BOTH PARTIES HAD SENT THEM D-DOWN. ANYTHING IRR... IRREGULAR...AND TWO SQUABBLING SUITS WOULD INSIST ON C-COMING ALONG FOR THE RIDE.

I MEAN I WAS TH... THERE, KID. IN FLORIDA, WHEN IT ALL WENT D-DOWN.

...REALLY?

SH...SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. I WAS ON... THE SECURITY D-DETAIL FOR THE RECOUNT.

YEAH... REALLY.

IT'S YOUR INSISTENCE ON UNREASONABLE STANDARDS THAT'S THE PROBLEM. YOU KNOW THE COURT WILL NEVER UP-HOLD--

THIS IS ABSURD... THE ISSUE OF THE DIMPLED CHADS IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT. WE SHOULD BE BACK AT--

MISTER...MISTER BERKELEY? MR. EDWARD BERKELEY...?

ROSCOE, HE'S DEAD... BEEN DEAD A LITTLE WHILE.

THIS IS A TRAGEDY... SHERIFF, ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE SAME MAN WHO CALLED ...?

HE MUST HAVE GIVEN HIMSELF AN OVER-DOSE.

MORPHINE... HE'S A CANCER PATIENT.

WELL, IT'S GOING TO TAKE A WHILE TO DETERMINE THAT, SIR...THE QUESTION FOR THE MOMENT IS WHAT HAPPENED.

Listen

Listen

IS...THIS MEANT AS HIS SUICIDE NOTE...?

By the time you hear this, I will be dead...

My name is Edward Jacobs Berkeley. As stated in my phone call, I am a recent resident of this county, and was selected as a citizen witness during the ongoing presidential vote recount.

Kiik

Li

.....

Malignant spinal osteosarcoma looks a lot like a disc injury. But it is fatal...and the pain is beyond belief.

...I...I SUPPOSE WE'D BETTER CALL THE CORONER AS WELL...

I'LL PUT A CALL IN TO THE CANVASSING BOARD AND CONFIRM THAT...

I could not wait even the twenty minutes I estimate it took you to arrive to kill myself.

The paper votes were a mess of different standards... all needed to be processed by hand. I was told mistakes in fact occur in every election...

On election night, the Republican candidate, Governor George Bush of Texas, won the decisive state of Florida on the first count by 2,000 votes. Yet this was less than one-fiftieth of one percent of the population. State law demanded an automatic recount...and it was one small portion of this chaos that I witnessed.

WHAP

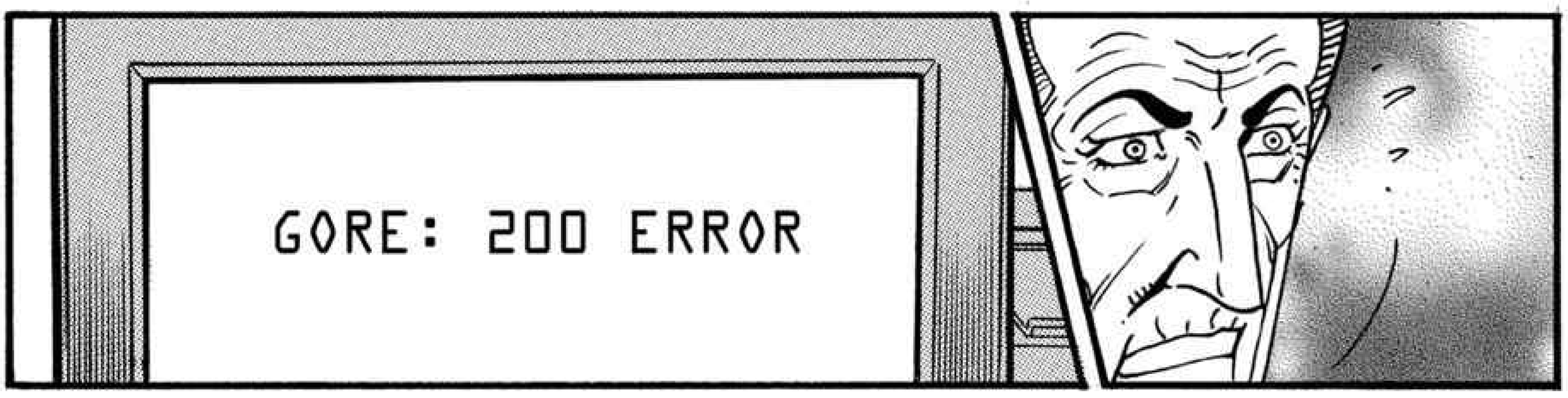
ERROR

ERROR? IT CAN'T READ THIS WHOLE DAMN STACK!

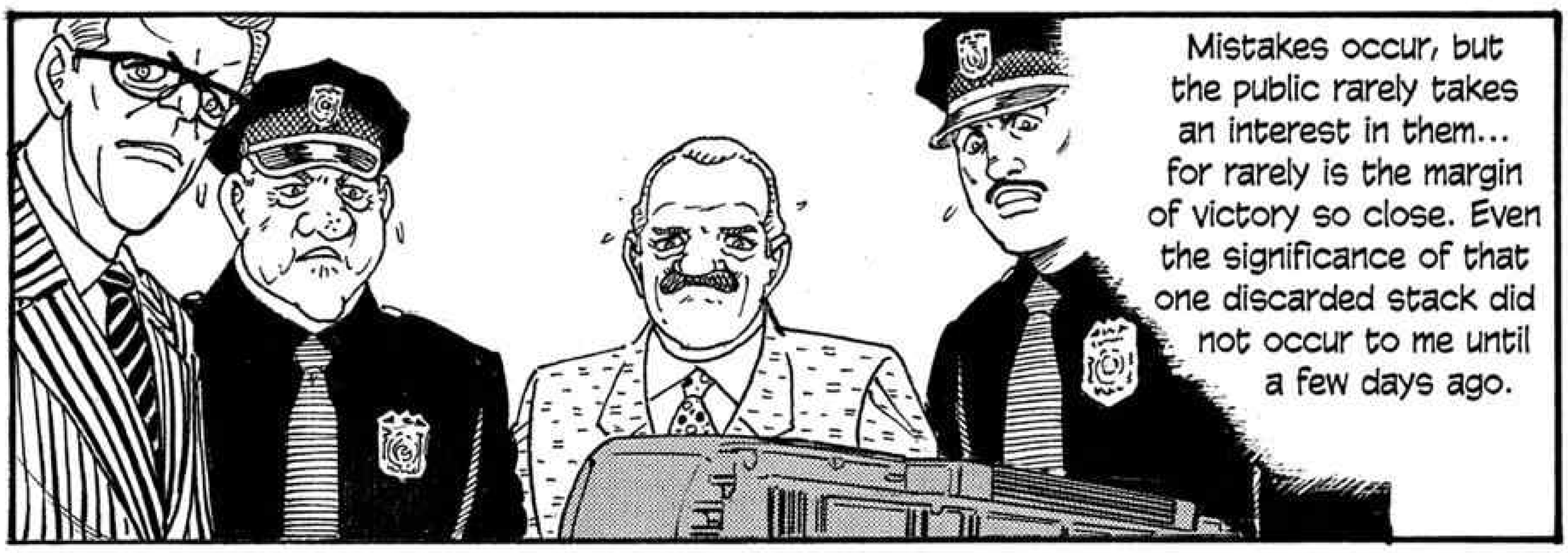
THOSE WERE FOR GORE...

INVALID VOTES

!!


GORE: 200 ERROR

GORE: 0

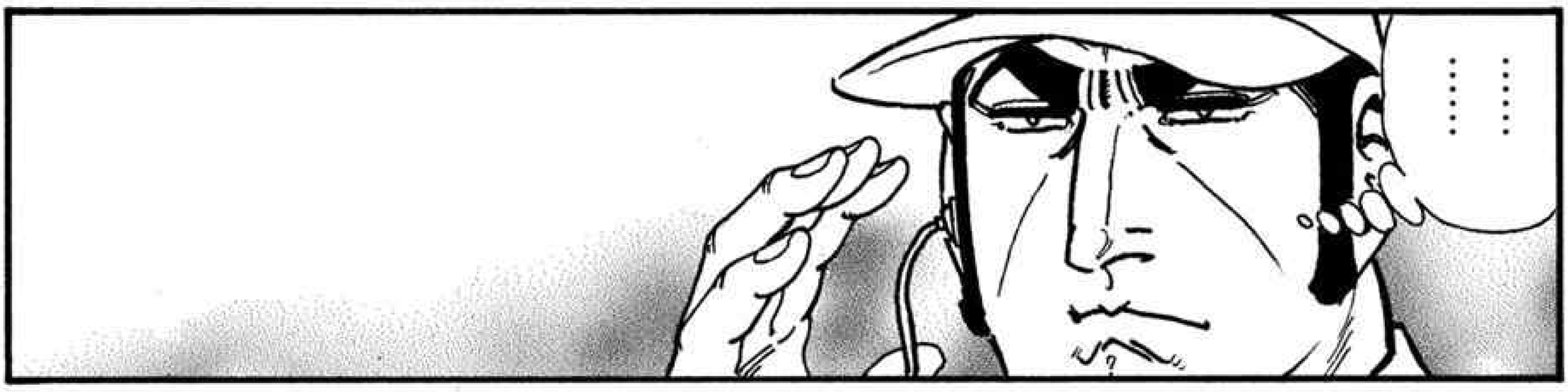

Mistakes occur, but the public rarely takes an interest in them... for rarely is the margin of victory so close. Even the significance of that one discarded stack did not occur to me until a few days ago.

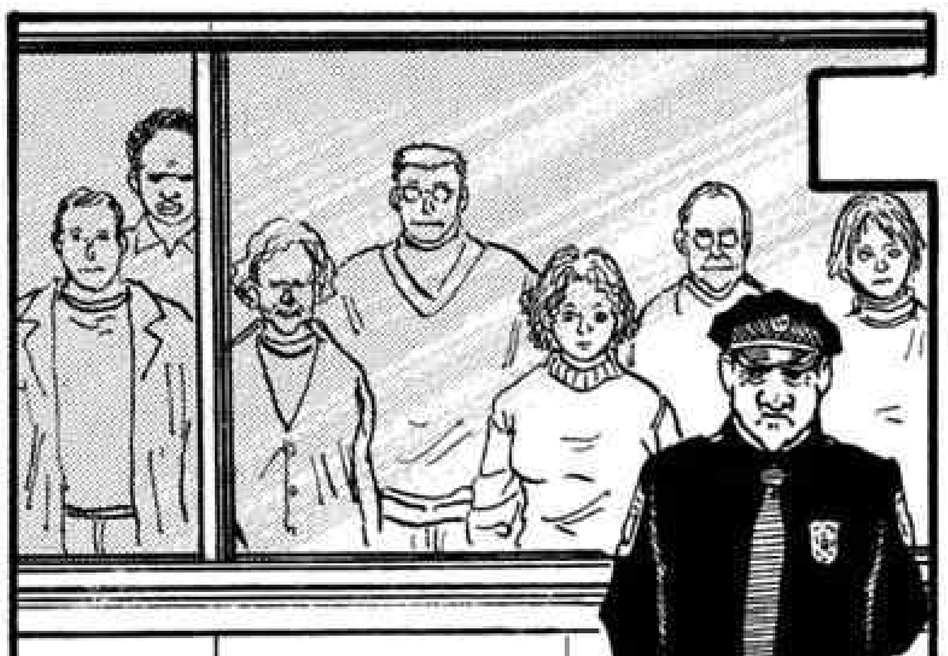
...IT WAS 200 VOTES ...?!
DID HE SAY...

THIS IS WHY HE CALLED...

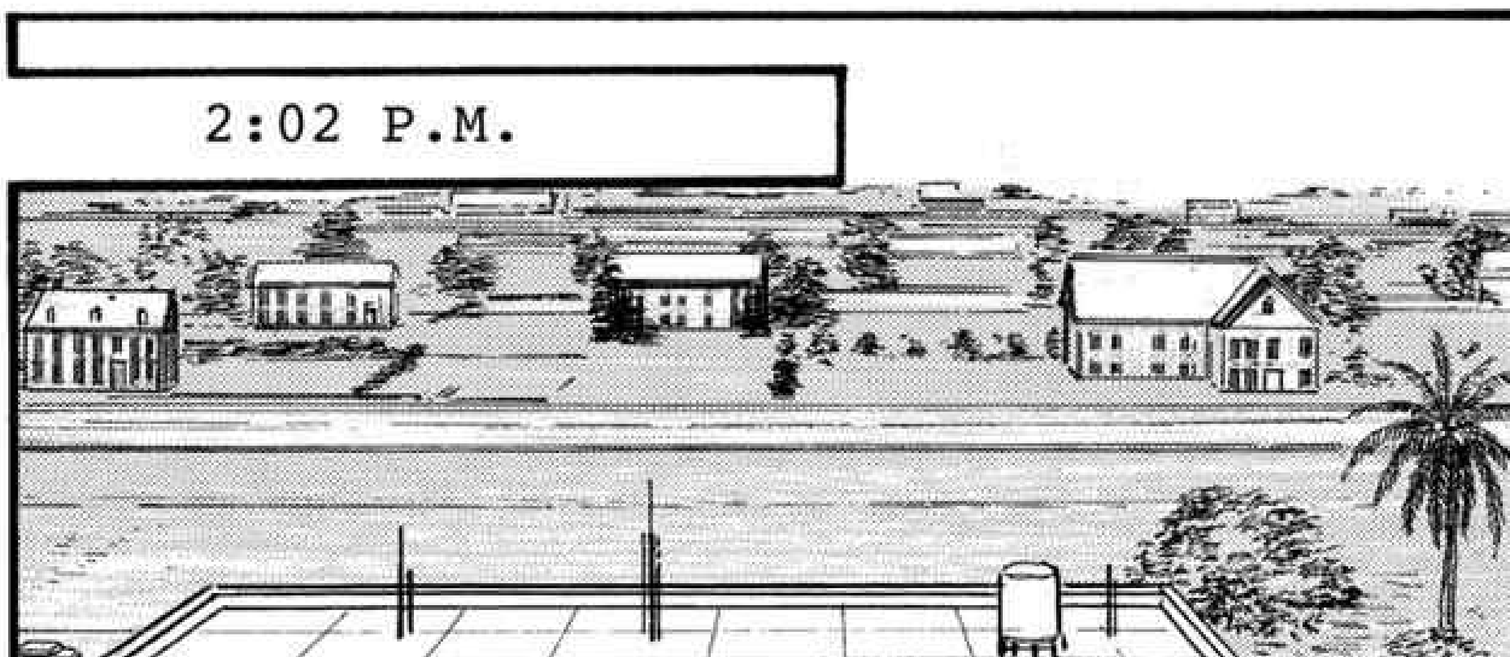
1:55 P.M.

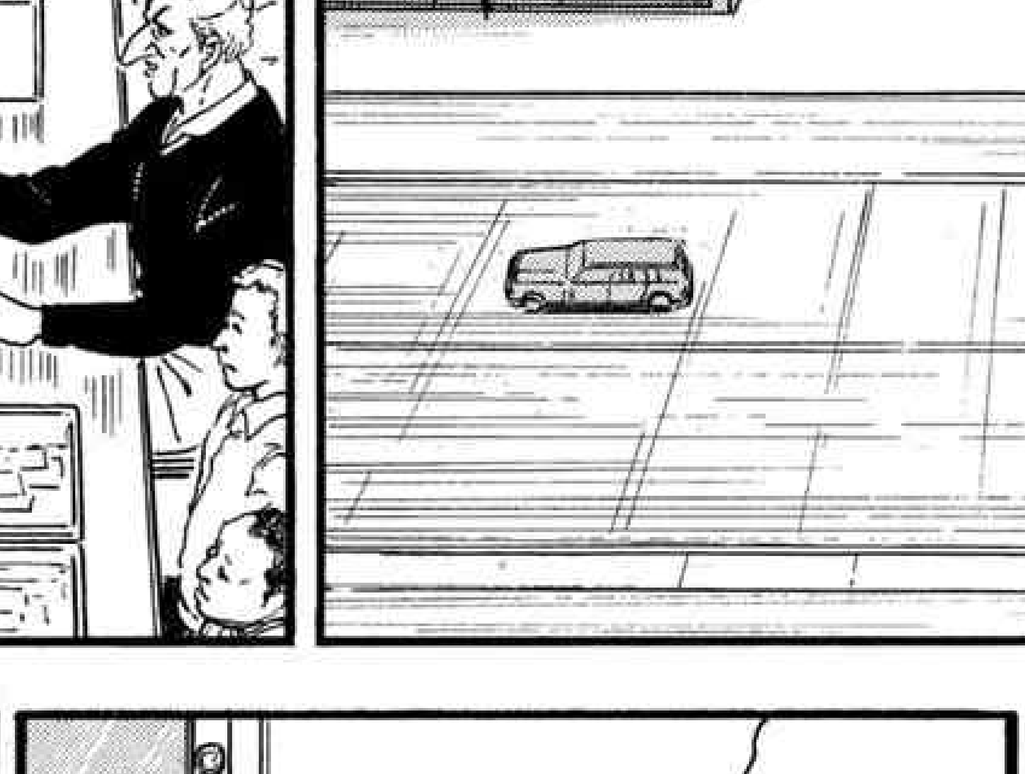
kang
kang
kang

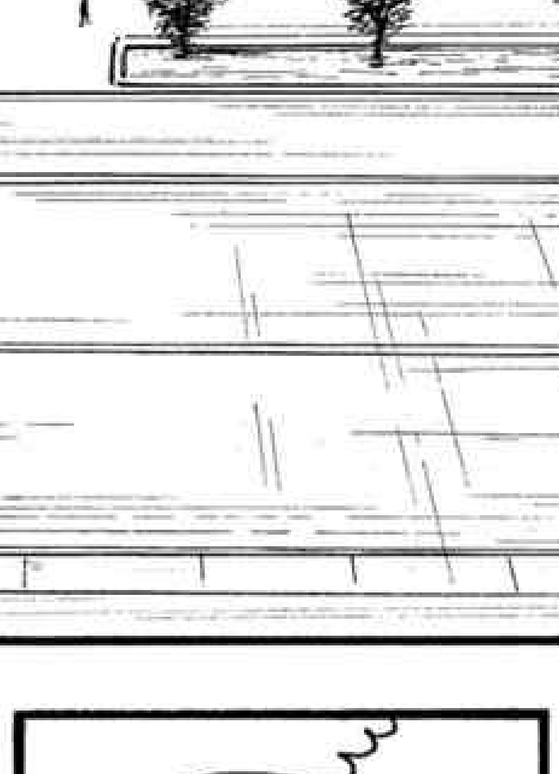




2:02 P.M.







TAKE A LOOK AT THIS!

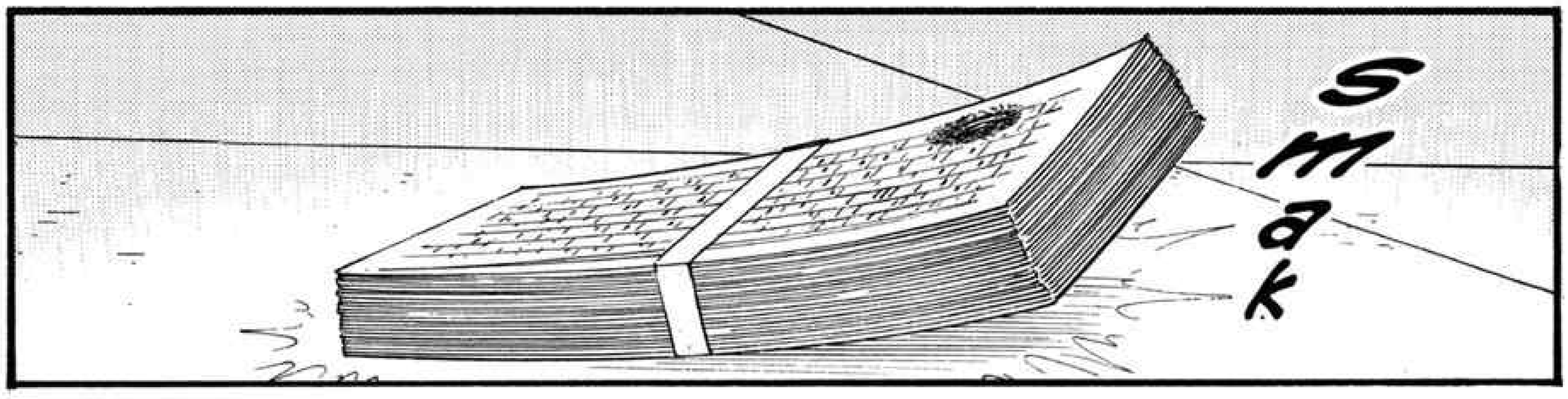
WHAT?!

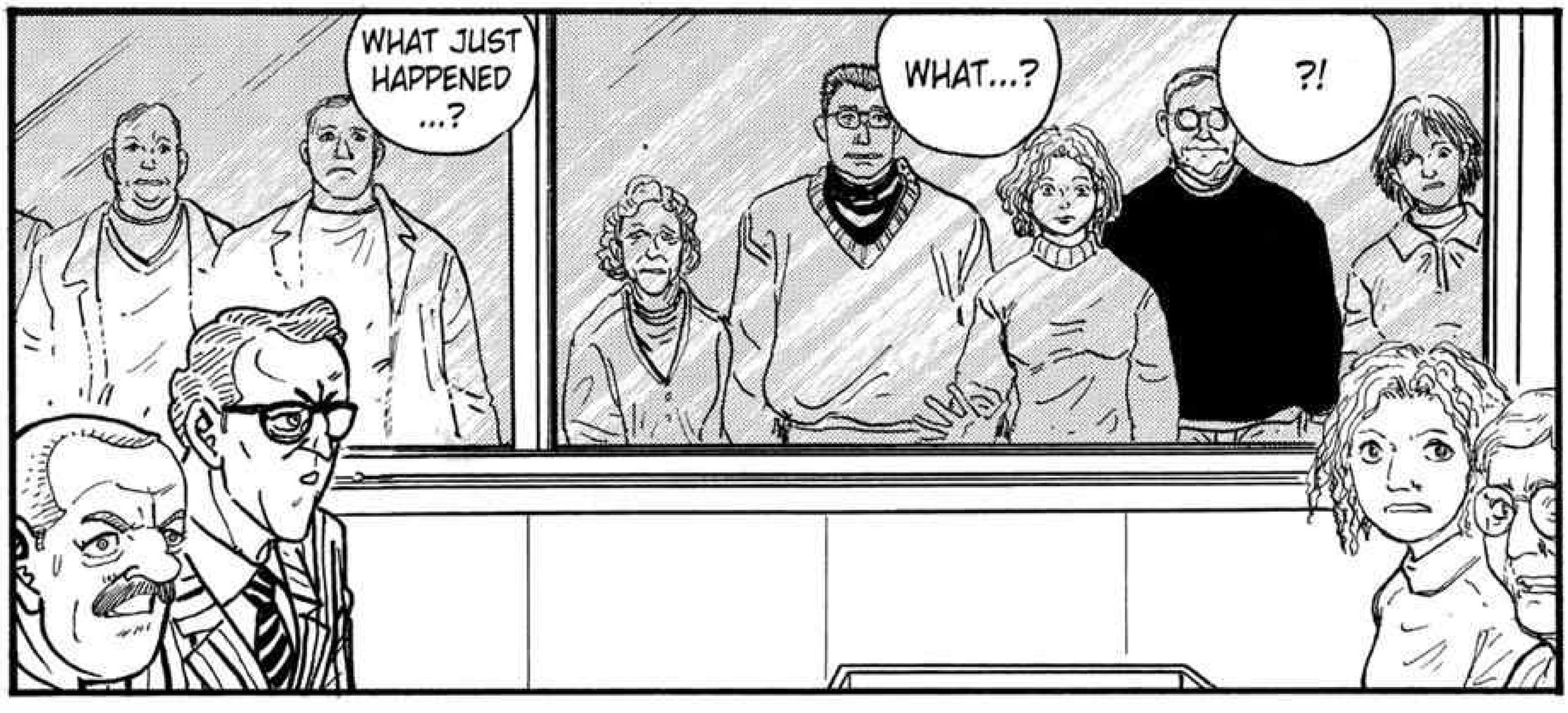
EH?

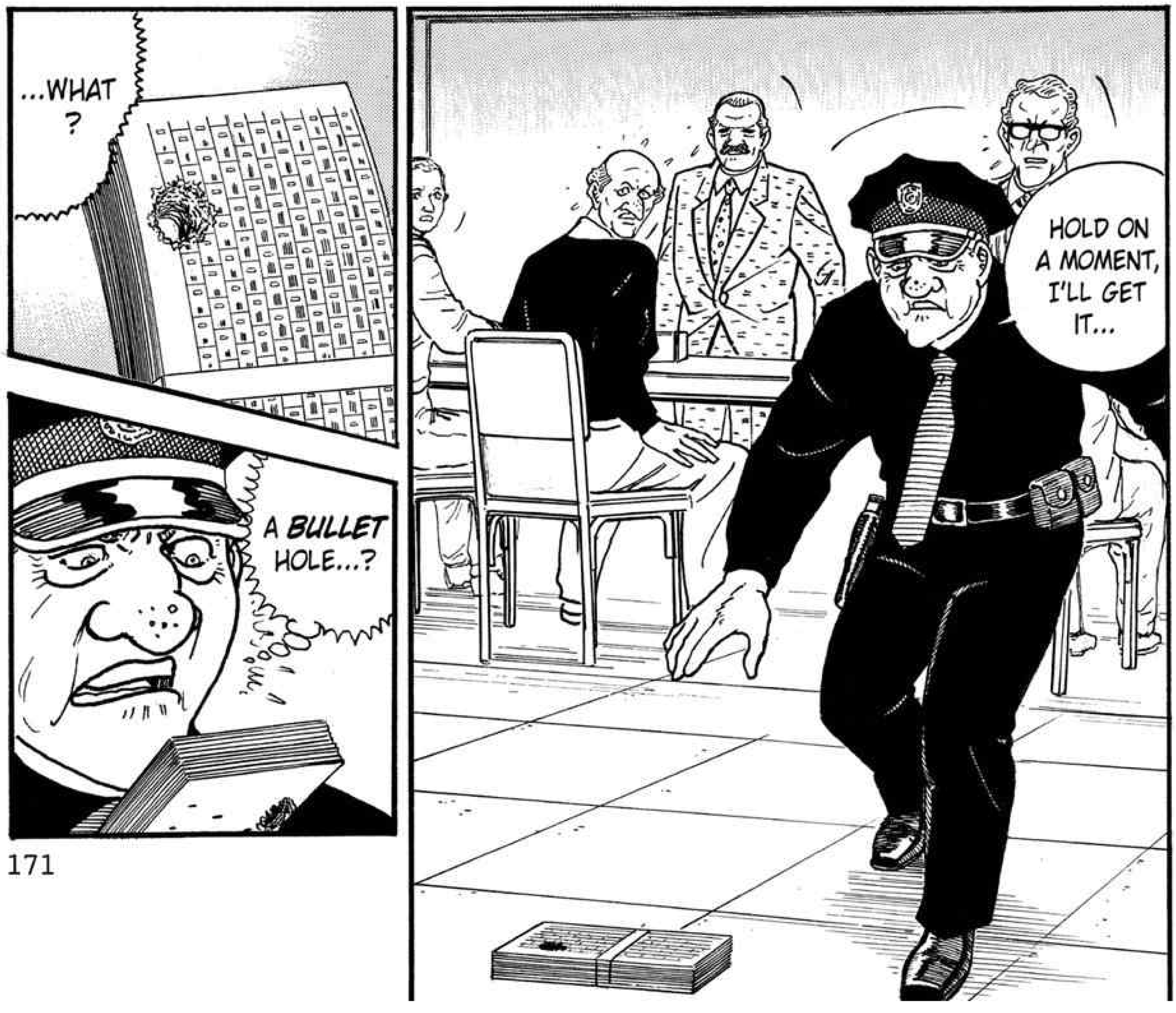
THESE ARE GORE VOTES THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN COUNTED--

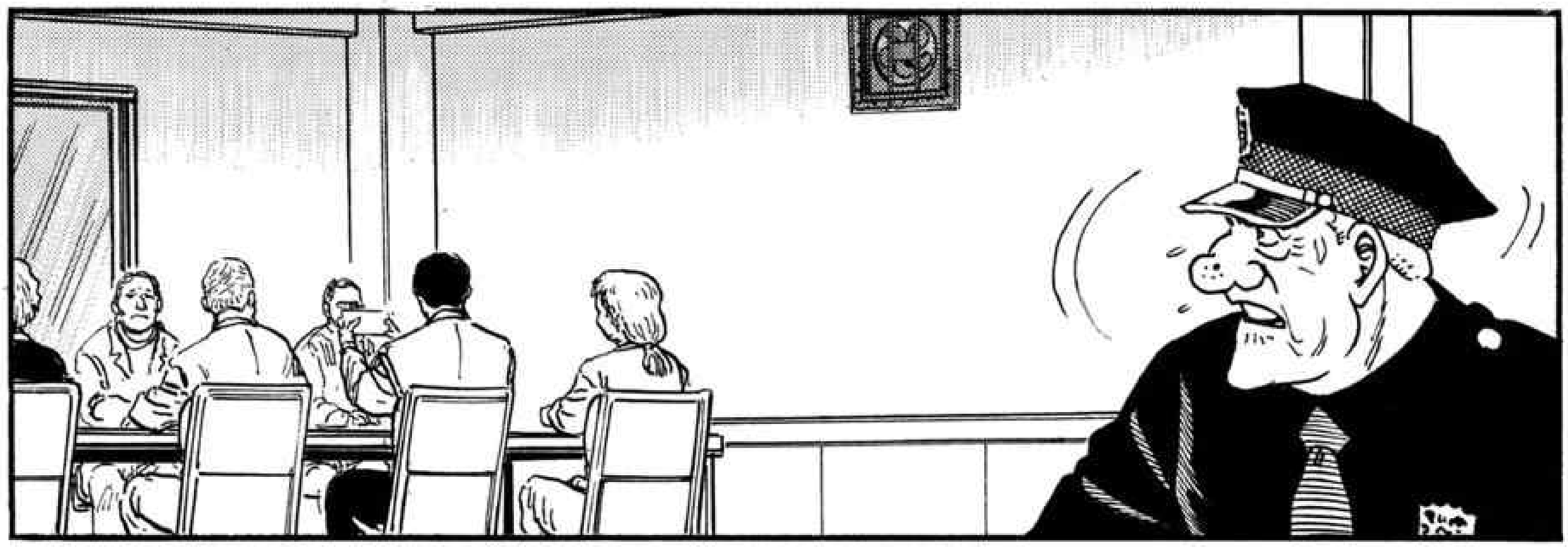
WHAMFFF

?!


SMACK


WHAT JUST HAPPENED ...?
WHAT...?
?!


...WHAT ?
A BULLET HOLE...?
HOLD ON A MOMENT, I'LL GET IT...



...WHAT'S WRONG, OFFICER?
W-WELL...

?

?

...IF I COULD TALK PRIVATELY WITH JUST THE STAFF AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPRESENT-ATIVE A MOMENT...

WHY? WHAT'S GOING ON?

WHAT?

SIR, IF I COULD ASK YOU NOT TO MOVE FROM THAT POSITION...

WELL...

ALL RIGHT-- WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?

HUH? IT WAS ABOUT HERE...

DID YOU HAVE YOUR HAND UP A LITTLE HIGHER?

I ADMIT IT SEEMS ODD, SIR, BUT...

I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING! AND WHERE WOULD THE SHOT HAVE COME FROM ...?

JUST *NOW* ?

WHAT?!

THAT'S THE ONLY POSSIBILITY.

...BUT IT MUST BE FOUR BLOCKS AWAY...

THERE'S A WAREHOUSE THAT COULD BE IN THE LINE OF SIGHT...

THROUGH THE *VENT*?!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE... BUT A SHOT LIKE THIS...THERE'S A MAN OUT THERE WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PULL IT OFF.

!!

WE CAN'T TRACE THE BALLISTICS, THEN...

I DON'T GET IT. WAS IT A SPECIAL *SHELL*? PLASTIC ROUND, MAYBE? IT MUST HAVE DISINTEGRATED ON IMPACT...THERE'S NO SIGN OF A BULLET HOLE IN THE OPPOSITE WALL...

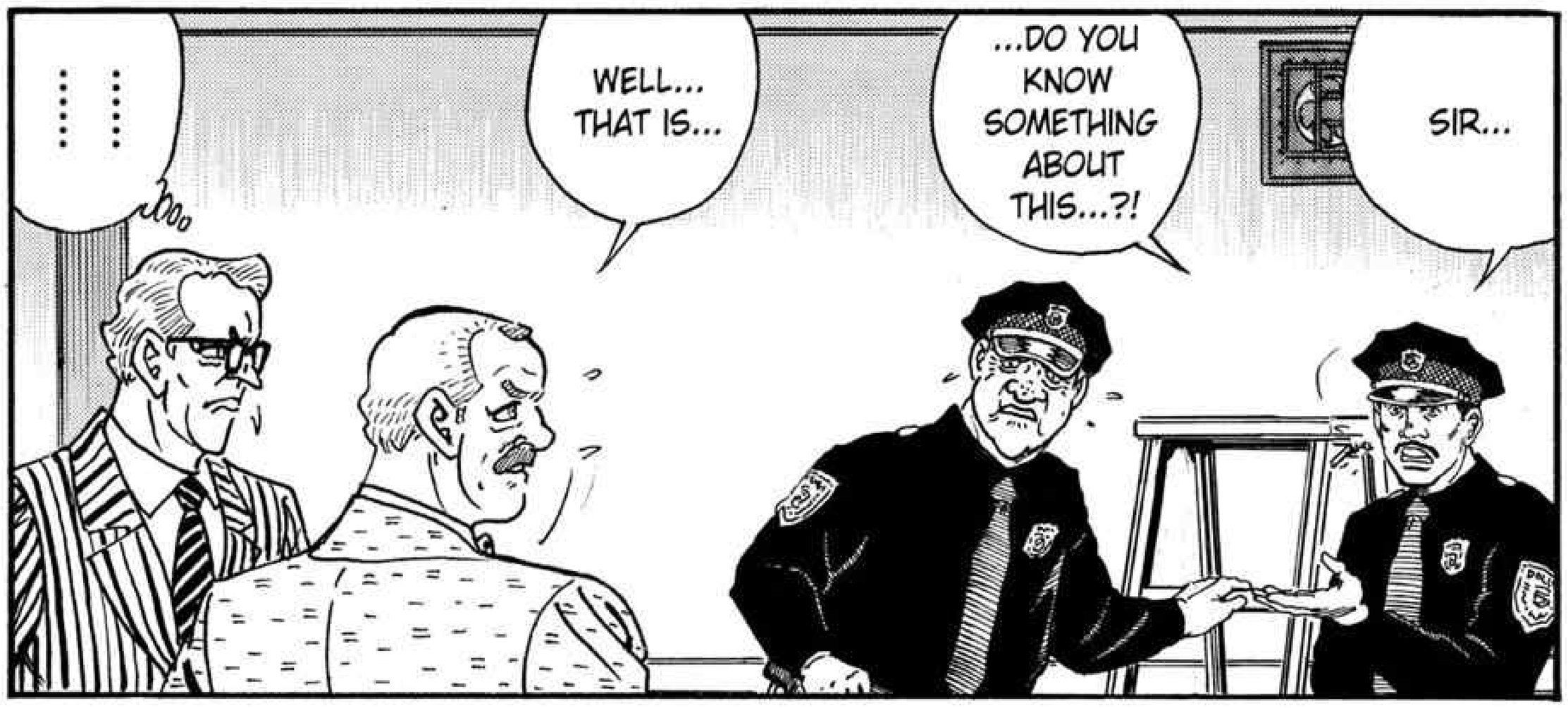
. . .

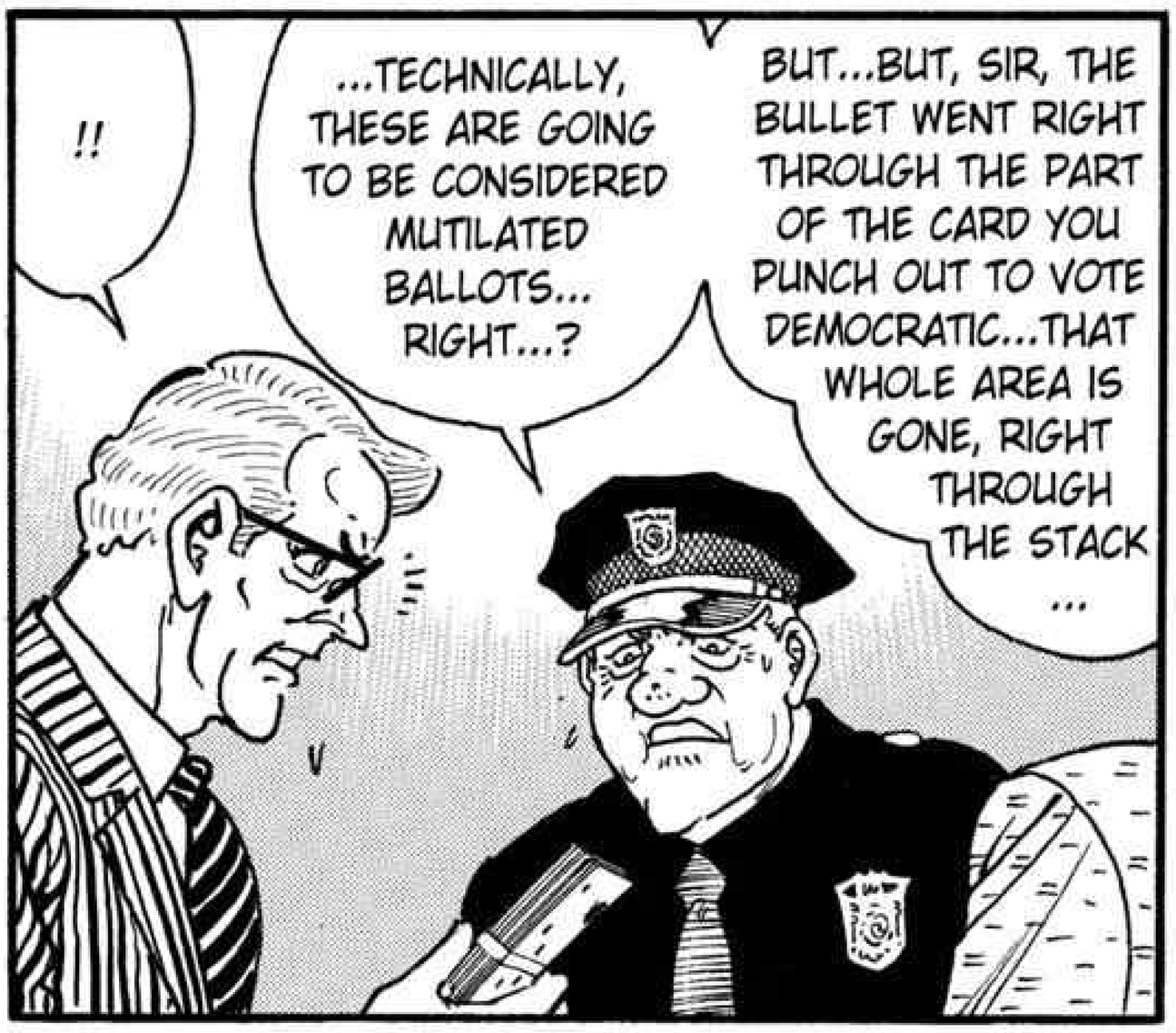
. . .

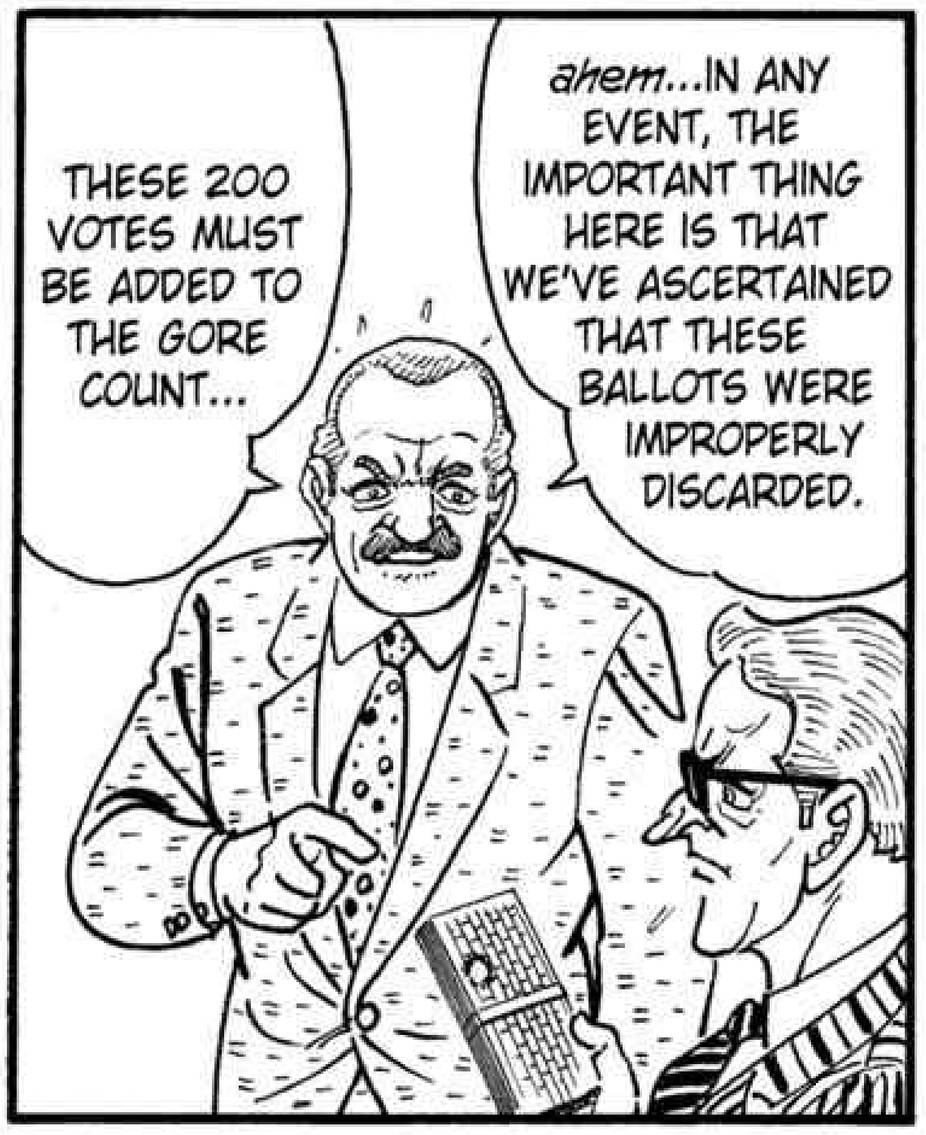
. . .

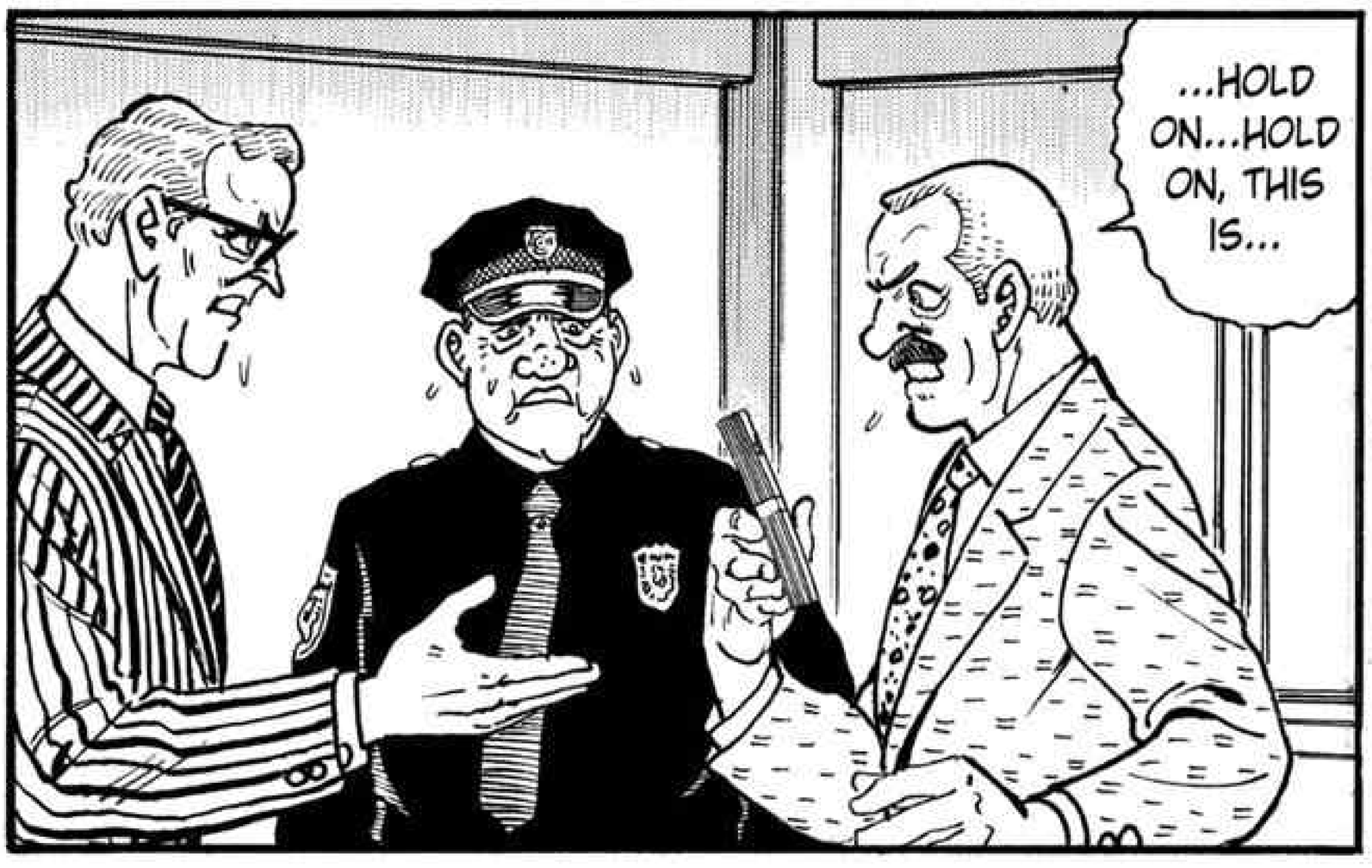
. . .

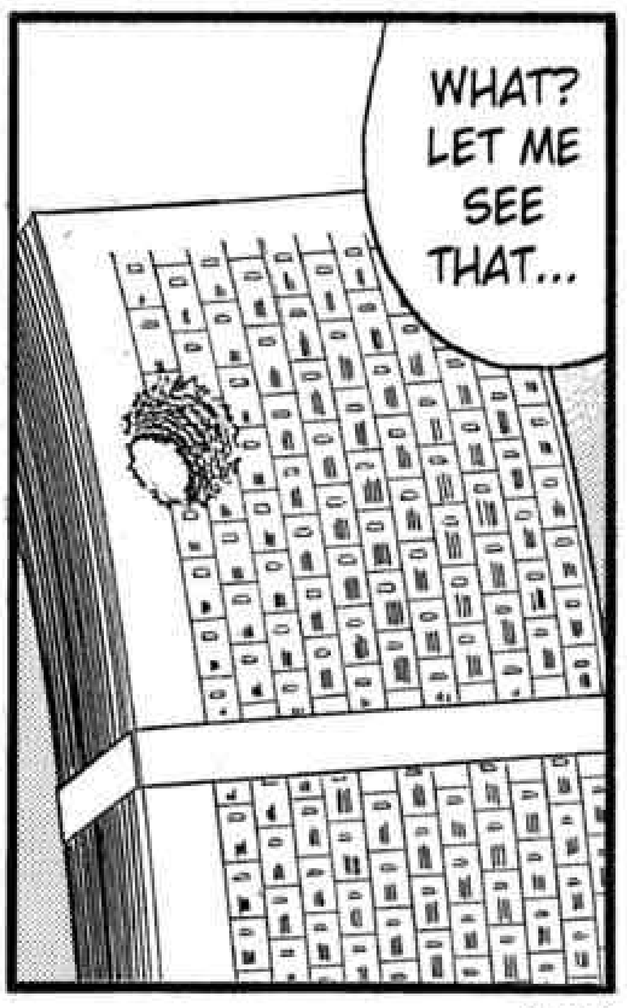
WAIT A MINUTE...


.....
WELL... THAT IS...
...DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...?!
SIR...


!!
...TECHNICALLY, THESE ARE GOING TO BE CONSIDERED MUTILATED BALLOTS... RIGHT...?
BUT...BUT, SIR, THE BULLET WENT RIGHT THROUGH THE PART OF THE CARD YOU PUNCH OUT TO VOTE DEMOCRATIC...THAT WHOLE AREA IS GONE, RIGHT THROUGH THE STACK ...


THESE 200 VOTES MUST BE ADDED TO THE GORE COUNT...
ahem...IN ANY EVENT, THE IMPORTANT THING HERE IS THAT WE'VE ASCERTAINED THAT THESE BALLOTS WERE IMPROPERLY DISCARDED.


...HOLD ON...HOLD ON, THIS IS...


WHAT? LET ME SEE THAT...

SIR? THERE'S AN URGENT PHONE CALL FOR YOU... A MR. BERKELEY, SIR...? HE CLAIMS TO HAVE INFORMATION REGARDING IRREGULARITIES IN THE RECOUNT...

OF ALL THE TIMES...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF SABOTAGE THIS IS, BUT...

NO, YOU'RE ***NOT*** GOING TO PULL THIS CRAP ON US! THESE WERE *GORE* VOTES, HE SAID SO!

WHAT? I ASSURE YOU, WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT...

...NO!

...ALL RIGHT, I'LL TAKE IT. HELLO? WHAT? WE'RE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF...

...NOW, I WANT YOU TO LISTEN CAREFULLY...

WHO'S THAT? HANG UP! WE'VE GOT TO WORK OUT THIS--

IS THE DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVE THERE WITH YOU, SIR...?

YOU HAD BETTER HURRY.

...YES, THAT'S THE RIGHT ADDRESS. IT'S THE ONE WITH THE FLAG FLYING OUT FRONT-- YOU CAN'T MISS IT.

Lyndon Johnson was born in 1908; Ronald Reagan in 1911; Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon both in 1913; John F. Kennedy in 1917.

...If you will forgive the ramblings of a retiree, I would like to speak about the presidents under which I served. Just the most basic facts.

Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush were both born in 1924. Seven presidents, separated by no more than 16 years from each other. But *twenty-two years* separated them all from Clinton, who was born in 1946. Do you see the true significance of that...?

I liked some more than others...but I understood every one of them.

Well, perhaps you don't. For over three decades I tended their garden, and during that time, I thought I knew what a president was. He was a loved man. A hated man. A flawed man. But all men whose era endowed them with a common conception of responsibility.

There are those who say it was shameful to impeach a president for lying about mere acts of personal misconduct--and even the truth that came out was only a small part of what I would see, up in the trees...

He claimed to follow a "third way"...meaning only that he tacked to left or right as need be.

I'm still not sure what, if anything, he really believed in. Power, yes. But policy? If he wasn't a Republican, he wasn't a Democrat either--certainly not like Kennedy, Johnson, or Carter were.

To my mind, they have it the wrong way round--it would have been less shameful, had the lies at least been bodyguard to some truth... however small.

The baby boomers felt *spiritual* entitlement... what they thought they never had to earn was a sense of righteousness. They inherited without maturing, and so their leadership is a false future...not a tree, but a vine that has trailed upon it...

He came from poverty, but there is more than one way to grow up spoiled. John F. Kennedy, raised in wealth, said correctly that his generation was *"tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace."*

THAT'S RIGHT...

I wonder if the American people sensed his illegitimacy. The six presidents who came before him received a majority of the popular vote. Clinton never did; not in 1992, nor 1996...

.....

There is very little I can do...but I cannot bear to simply let the Presidency pass to his deputy. Governor Bush is nearly the same age; he may be no better. But he is a chance for change...

WHAT? WHAT DOES *THAT* MATTER? HE WON THE ELECTORAL VOTES! THAT'S THE SYSTEM--

HOW COULD THIS BE...

And I am silent, yet I will make one now.

My generation--the one between him and all the others that I served--William Manchester called *The Silent Generation*. In this century, we alone never made a president.

WE NEED TO GET BACK TO COUNTING--

WHO IS THIS MAN, ANYWAY? IS THIS SOME SORT OF SICK JOKE?

200 votes might make a difference.

I will make one with very little, the little that fate allowed me, out of millions of Americans, to witness. When Gore demanded a new, manual recount, I knew those discarded ballots would be found.

I would never ask him to kill the Vice-President, you understand. Nor, perhaps, would he have accepted that job, and make himself so great an enemy of our nation. But this one peculiar chance to use his skills stood before me...

.....

.....

THE SNIPER...?

...ASK... HIM TO...

EEYAA!

WHOOMF

An assassin, using his skills to renew life...A man who may restore morality and decency to the White House...

ENOUGH... THIS IS GOING STRAIGHT TO OUR ATTORNEYS--

CHAK

Listen

Listen

NOT TO DESTROY EVIDENCE-- BUT AS A WARNING, I THINK...

BERKELEY RIGGED THAT...

--HE WAS *INSANE!*

WHAT THE--

.....

...IT DOESN'T MATTER...INSANE OR NOT, HE CLEARLY BORE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS INCIDENT. ALL OF US HERE ARE WITNESSES...

YOU CAN'T IGNORE THIS! YOU KNOW DAMNED WELL WHO HE'S TALKING ABOUT--

WHAT? THIS IS A CRIME AGAINST AMERICA!

THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE WILL DECLINE TO PURSUE THIS MATTER FURTHER.

YOU...

IT SIMPLY CAME AROUND AT THE WRONG TIME. JUST BAD LUCK--IT COULD HAVE BEEN US.

YOU THINK WE HAVEN'T HEARD RUMORS ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE HIRING HIM YOURSELVES? SOMETHING IN IRAQ, THEY SAY...? WELL, YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN IT'S *YOUR* TURN... WHEN WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND.

. . . .

DOOOO

DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION THAT MAY BE HELPFUL IN THIS CASE ...?

SIR, WHAT ARE YOU ALL TALKING ABOUT...?

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

...I'M SURE OUR DEPARTMENT CAN PROTECT YOU...

IF...IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THAT GUN-MAN...

NO, WE CAN'T PROVE ANYTHING ...

...BALLOTS WERE MUTILATED INSTANTLY BY THE SHOT. I WAS THERE...I SAW IT...

. . . . . .

...I UNDER-STAND.

...BUT THE RULES NOW SAY IT COMES DOWN TO WHOMEVER WINS FLORIDA ALONE, AND THEREFORE THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE.

HALF A MILLION MORE AMERICANS VOTED FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENT...

...YOU KNOW THERE HASN'T BEEN A SITUATION LIKE THIS IN OUR COUNTRY SINCE *1888?* I MEAN, IT'S TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE FOR THE CANDIDATE WHO WINS THE MOST VOTES NATIONWIDE TO *STILL* LOSE THE PRESIDENCY.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE BUTTERFLY BALLOTS IN PALM BEACH COUNTY...IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE ELIÁN GONZÁLEZ AFFAIR...IF...IF... *IF...*

...I DON'T KNOW... GORE DIDN'T EVEN WIN HIS HOME STATE-- IF HE HAD, HE WOULDN'T HAVE NEEDED FLORIDA. IF NADER HADN'T RUN-- HE TOOK ALMOST 100,000 VOTES IN THIS STATE ALONE...

...THAT TINY WORD MIGHT DRIVE ME CRAZY AS THAT OLD BASTARD.

WEEE

The recount continued for four more weeks, and the gap between the candidates narrowed each day, even as both sides took the battle to the judicial branch. On December 9, 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court, by a vote of 5-4, ordered the Florida recount stopped, with Governor Bush ahead by 154 votes. Vice-President Gore said, "For the sake of our unity as a people and the strength of our democracy, I offer my concession."

COUNT ALL THE VOTES

HAIL TO THE THIEF

JESUS SAVES!

GORE LIEBERMAN

DUBYA WON!!

And under law the flag was raised burning, in an invisible and heatless flame.

S-SO...NOW YOU KNOW THE...THE TRUTH...

OF COURSE I CARE!

I'M ALMOST OFF WORK. HEY, MIND IF I COME OVER...?

!

...SHIT.

WHAM

...B-BUT HE DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO...

A-ASSHOLE KID...CLAIMED HE *WOULD* HAVE VOTED FOR HIM, RIGHT...

...WHEN THERE ARE *MILLIONS* OF P-PEOPLE LIKE HIM...?

WH-WHAT DOES IT M-MATTER THEN...A FEW HUNDRED VOTES...

Peacock

BAR

HEY!

WHUD

!

WATCH IT, BUDDY.

...WHO THE FUCK WAS THAT...?

.....

...D-DOWN WHERE I HAD A B-BRUSH WITH HISTORY.

L-LOT OF YELLOW CREEPS, UP HERE IN NEW YORK...G-GONNA BE GLAD TO GET BACK TO FLORIDA, WHERE IT'S NOT QUITE SO SLANTY...

END

Flagburner
Originally published in the March 17, 2001 issue of *Big Comic* magazine

Afterword Part One: Ancient Times in Japan

by Takashi Fukuda (ex-*Golgo 13* editor)

Were you aware of the career in ancient Japan known as *Jisui* (持衰)?

Around the year 200 AD, or 1,400 years before the *Mayflower* was constructed, before your country was even a frontier, the ancestors of the Japanese, who did not yet have any real form of nation, had nevertheless been sending ambassadors recklessly to China in order that their state might be recognized.

Onboard these primitive embassy ships were people of a specialized purpose. These people were known as *Jisui*. During the voyage, their role was to neither work, eat, drink, shave, nor bathe, but only to pray for the safety of the crew during the journey. If the ship reached its destination safely, the Jisui were paid with money and such—but if the ship fared ill, they would bear its bad luck on their shoulders, and were thrown into the sea as a sacrifice.

The Jisui themselves did not belong to any nation or fleet. They were professionals within the time and space of a sea voyage. There had likewise been such "professionals" to be found in Japan since ancient days, and it was a well-known bit of common sense not to question the way they'd work to solve a problem from the outside. Those deciding to meddle with them would be cursed. Yet any mistakes made by those professionals would not only result in a loss of trust, but would be their responsibility—it would even mean their lives.

Generations of fictional superheroes in the U.S. and Europe have fought for their countries, bearing the national flag on their backs. You may even notice the openings of a story where they pose with the waving flag in the background. Regarding Europe, the famous Asterix fought as a symbol of Gaul—that is, France. The more flesh-and-blood James Bond did likewise for England. If we point toward America, there's Napoleon Solo and Maxwell Smart.

The reason they fight is in order to maintain their country and protect their interests. THRUSH and KAOS are without a doubt "Eastern Industrial Groups." Even though U.N.C.L.E. headquarters is near the U.N. Building, the organization represents the interests of the United States. The "common enemy" in *Superman* is Communism, is it not? Superman fought Nazis and Communists. Basically, everyone is fighting for their nation. Even Rambo fought for his country, the only difference being that he realized in it his personal values. Some might say Jack Ryan is different because he is fighting for his family, but no matter how you think about it, he is fighting for his family and government residing in the United States of America. Without being aware, these heroes are putting this fact into practice: America accepts the cruelest actions on its behalf, regardless of the heroes' morals, values, religion, era, or planet of origin.

When *Golgo 13* first appeared in Japan, the *film noir* age in France was ending and the Japanese economy was stabilizing to the point where exports "Made in Japan" were just starting to mean something other than inferior quality. Japanese industry, shipping its goods to foreign countries, may have needed a Jisui—called "Golgo 13."

I'm not sure if you'd have noticed, but there is no tradition of inheritance of manga titles in Japan. That is, in contrast to other forms of Japanese art—*kabuki*, the tea ceremony and the like—where the techniques, forms, and names are passed down from generation to generation, all manga titles, almost without exception,

Afterword Part Two: Waga Seishun no *Golgo 13*
(Golgo 13 of My Youth)
by Carl Gustav Horn (now also an ex-*Golgo 13* editor)

For those of you who haven't met Mr. Fukuda, please allow me to paint the picture. Spring in South of Market a few years ago; two blocks toward the Bay from where VIZ used to be and long was—a bright sunny little café facing a small strip of park. We have now entered into what those writing their dissertations on manga would call a liminal zone, between the poorer quarters and the gentrifying breeze that blows up from the water. In San Francisco there can be no middle class, only victory. Imagine then the gapes of the clientele inside, adorned with pointy helmets and bike-pants, nourished by Whole Foods, as into this café stepped Mr. Fukuda—topcoat over two-piece suit, silk scarf over topcoat, dark glasses over cigarette. He looked—and I'm not sure how well this will translate into Japanese—cooler than a motherfucker.

I'm a so-called manga editor, but that only means I adapt them into English. Mr. Fukuda was the real deal, present in the thick of the most vital decade for manga, the 1970s—when adults in Japan had begun to read them in large numbers, but before they had quite acquired respectability. His attire, aforementioned, was all I could dream an editor of *Golgo 13* would choose. Yet somehow I still lusted that the moment should be perfect, and so, when he spoke, although through an interpreter, some part of my brain automatically dubbed him over in the voice of Sonny Chiba from *The Bodyguard*. "I'm so pleased you decided to pick 'The Orbital Hit' as one of the stories," said Mr. Fukuda, his lip-synch ever so slightly off. "For you see—I wrote it." It seemed I had gotten off to a good start with him, but I was not prepared for what was to happen next. Mr. Fukuda gave me a pair of *Golgo 13* boxers. I would like to say that they bear an arrow and the words, "At any rate, an amazing penis," but thus far all of my account has been strictly factual.

I wear them now, as a sort of temple undergarment, while I write this. If you're curious, and even if you're not, I will reveal that they in fact contain, as a pattern, panels from what had been the last effort at an English *Golgo 13*, ten years previous, the three-issue "The Argentine Tiger," with its shock ending you dare not reveal (spoiler: Golgo's target dies). Oddly, although "The Argentine Tiger" was colorized in an attempt to better appeal to regular U.S. comics readers (an approach that really only ever worked with Steve Oliff's skillful adaptation of the Epic Comics edition of *Akira*), no Japanese would ever know this by examining the shorts themselves, as all the panels have been rendered neither in the black-and-white of their original, nor in the American comics colors of their adaptation, but in a consistent moral gray.

Yet as is argued by Takao Saito, the critics featured in File 13, and the stories themselves, Golgo 13 does in fact reduce grays to black-and-white, for what could be more so than the decision to kill, or not? The difference between Duke Togo and the traditional American superhero is that the reduction is performed in its entirety by himself; he's not a deputized figure in a cape who collars the villain and then turns him over to the authorities, thus humbly acknowledging that while he might fight for justice, he is not the embodiment of justice itself (that, of course, would be the government). Indeed, he would appear to be the opposite of the classic American superhero, many of whom make a point of not killing; Golgo almost always uses his "powers" to kill.

It's worth noting, by the way, that people like Golgo or the Jackal don't seem to exist in real life. I don't mean supermen who speak thirteen languages; I mean contract killers who use sniping as a method. If every once in a while some businessman, mobster, or politician was found dead—the victim of a mysterious rifle bullet—you could conclude that such a person was operating out there. But while hit-men do exist in real life, they tend to use a planted bomb or pistol at close range. Since sharpshooting is not all that rare a skill—hunters and soldiers learn it—and since hit men presumably wish to minimize their own danger, it's interesting to speculate why. One theory is that it's more difficult than imagined to confirm a specific individual's identity through a sniper's scope, whereas game hunters and military snipers don't usually have to concern themselves with the exact deer or artilleryman on the other end—only with the type of target they are.

Mr. Fukuda's remarks on how Western heroes fight with the "flag on their backs" reminds us that national security, like religion, is a weaker justification for killing in modern Japan. This has been true domestically as well as abroad; for example, despite the blood-drawing clashes between radicals and government in 1960s Japan, there was no question of bringing in the National Guard–like Self-Defense Force, let alone anything like the U.S. massacres of protestors at Kent or Jackson State. The silent majority in America tolerated such, but the Japanese public would not have stood for it. George Orwell, who certainly fought and supported the fight against Fascism in the 1930s and '40s, nevertheless dryly noted that even soldiers on the democratic side served governments that "had the power to absolve them of evil." Takao Saito showed similar dubiousness toward such justice-by-fiat in his interview. One might say the postwar Japanese worldview that gave rise to *Golgo 13* is naïve. I'm not sure that must mean our own has been so sensible.

I first encountered Duke Togo when I was myself just a young lil' "G"—somewhere in the Carter years, which makes me regret he doesn't get a cameo in any of the stories translated here. I have a distinct memory of being in a college library in Houston, waiting for my mother. At first the coffee vending machine in the hall was enough to fix me with Ayumu Kasuga–like fascination, as I tried to wrap my head around the concept that it dispensed both coffee, a *drink*, and chicken soup, a *food*. But even those ribbed paper cups were empty of appeal (and if you remember, half the time they *were* empty) compared to the discovery I was to make past the double wooden portals of the library proper—that great red folio at Dewey Decimal 741.503, *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*.

U.S. libraries today are embracing manga and graphic novels with a passion, but in the late 1970s comics were a bit scarce on the shelves, perhaps for the simple reason hardly any were yet available in bound form. You might have found collections of *Peanuts* and *Doonesbury* (1970s *Doonesbury*, like '70s Kirby, was solid gold), but that would hardly prepare a 9-year-old kid for the cosmic revelations that awaited him inside the *Encyclopedia*. Even as a grown-ass man the book is huge, a thick folio; I can only imagine what a codex of the infinite planes it must have seemed to me, back when I was shotalicious.

First published in the summer of 1976, and edited by Maurice Horn (no relation—I don't think), *The World Encyclopedia of Comics* lived up to its name, containing 790 pages of entries on comics of all nations and their creators. Horn achieved this breadth of field very sensibly by recruiting contributing editors from different countries, including Hisao Kato for Japan, who for the *Encyclopedia* wrote a remarkable 69 articles on various manga and manga artists, making it perhaps the most substantial English-language resource on manga available in the 1970s. Nearly all were accompanied by black-and-white illustrations, and some were even represented in the central color section; a lurid full page of Tatsuhiko Yamagami's *Gaki Deka* wielding a spiked whip upon a salaryman put to rest any notion in my young mind that this was supposed to be educational.

The *Encyclopedia*'s remarks on *Golgo 13* and Takao Saito show the prominence both had already achieved only seven or eight (depending on how you wish to count) years into a title that, this year, will celebrate its 40th anniversary. In the book's introductory timeline, for example, the premiere of *Golgo 13* was considered important enough to mark as one of the three most notable events in world comics in 1969 (for example, 1970 was then

are worked upon by one generation alone. In this period of time, the main characters must either grow and become stronger or overcome the situation at hand. An example of the former would be something like *Dragon Ball*, whereas the latter would be *Golgo 13*. Growth requires new enemies (that is, rivals), whereas overcoming the situation at hand requires new situations, and changes in situations.

Let me answer one of the common queries foreigners make, which is, "Why do the Japanese read comics so much?" This comes down to the length of our commutes. The workforce and students of Japan on average travel 50 minutes—and sometimes as long as two hours—one-way to a destination. Manga magazines, text messaging, pocket PCs and the like could be said to have been invented to make this time pass by more comfortably. The sizes of the magazines are all standardized to be the width of an average Japanese person's shoulders, minus 15 centimeters. This size is manageable, and does not cause inconvenience to others when riding in a full train.

Many hear that the Japanese are always reading comics, but this impression is also influenced by the size format of these magazines. When a foreigner rides the subways, they are likely to more easily notice the people who are reading manga as opposed to books, because the typical *bunko*-size [the U.S. edition of *Lone Wolf and Cub* is in this size—C.G.H.] Japanese paperback is only 60 percent of the size of American "pocket books." To a foreigner, it would look like they were praying. This, together with using dust jackets on softcover books, is one of the many good graces of Japan.

One of the reasons you could bring up for why *Golgo 13* is so widely read in Japan is "lack of religion." The Japanese, with some exceptions, don't get deeply involved in their religion, whether it be Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, or others. This doesn't mean there is no observance of religion in everyday life. However, Buddhists in Japan still consume meat, and Christians still visit Shinto shrines for New Year's.

If the main character of *Golgo 13* was an Islamist, his actions would be severely limited, and there would be instances where the story could not proceed. The same thing would apply were he a devout Christian. Having no religion isn't the same as having no nationality, but it certainly wouldn't help to be thus limited in the turns the plot could take. The notorious Dr. Hannibal Lecter's personality is said to have taken great influence from Japanese ideals. This is no coincidence, but a necessity rather in order to create an unpredictable character who can keep the plot turning. Well, blaming the existence of a psychopath on Japanese and European history might be going a bit overboard, but if I were to summarize, I'd say cultures with a Christian background probably do not give birth to heroes other than those who take pride in brute strength.

When we, the Japanese, need to explain the above truth to "foreigners," we put our hands together and smile loudly. You must have seen, through images and reality, Japanese people who make the same gestures. Take a look at the habits of a Japanese baseball player who has scored many hits. In the "manual" of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Japanese are instructed to take such actions in order to protect the secret of our know-how. If one does not follow this rule, the fate of being assassinated by "Golgo 13" awaits them.

But neither is Golgo a grim 'n' gritty character like The Midnighter, Rorschach or The Punisher (or *The Executioner* series that inspired him—there is a bit of Mack Bolan in the terse subtitles chosen for this edition's volumes). Golgo is on a crusade against nobody, least of all "criminals" or "scum." Some of the people he kills clearly leave the world a little better for their passing, but he rarely seems to relish the fact (his taunting of Chief Sturgis at the end of "The Dark-Skinned Sniper" is perhaps as close as he comes). He *reduces* complex moral questions to black-and-white, but he's not Mr. A either; this reduction is not a consequence of his worldview as such. Rather, it is like that of a chemist or distiller, in which he begins with the raw materials of a world in spectrum, this color and that pleading their mix of history, reasons, and rationalizations before him. Should the mix in turn make it through the hidden complex pipework inside him, the cold twists of probabilities, risks, angles, and tactics, he will accept the job.

And through a bend of morality, though this he rarely admits. Since *Golgo 13* has lasted as long as it has through a bond with its readers, his morals must be ones they accept—at least as fiction. Mr. Fukuda spends some time trying to discuss this, although his winking final paragraph suggests he's not trying to slam his arguments down with dissertation force; in fact it reminds me a little of *Short Cuts*' advisory on Japanese customs, "Falling [sic] to do so, one will get slain by a samurai."

It's interesting that he brings up the influence, or lack of same, of Christianity. Golgo doesn't seem especially anti-clerical; he has for pay helped priests and ministers. Heck, there was that time when he rescued the Pope. On the other hand, the image on the back of every single volume of *Golgo 13*, a skeleton surmounted by a crown of thorns, seems possibly heretical, even Satanic in its symbolism—mocking the resurrection of the body. Fukuda invokes a comparison to Hannibal Lecter, who, prior to being "explained" by an origin story (perhaps Golgo 13 has been wise never to confirm one—the manga has had at least two other stories with different possible origins for Golgo that were as detailed as "The Serizawa Family Murders") was presented in the novels as a Satan figure, both in his conversations with Clarice Starling, and motifs such as his six-fingered left hand and signing himself as "666." A 1993 *Golgo 13* story entitled "15: 34," as in the Gospel of Mark's "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" had Golgo entering an AI program whimsically named "Jesus" that had fixated on him. After dispatching it with a computer virus (and not, as you might expect, with a few judicious M16 rounds into the processor), Golgo then makes the quip from verse 36 seen on the last page of Vol. 08's File 13. I'll bet James Bond would have never whipped out *that* one-liner.

Speaking of whom, Mr. Saito would have known—as he did the 007 manga adaptation—just how he got that license to kill. The recent, admirable film version of *Casino Royale* preserves the original 1953 novel's idea that Bond had to carry out two assassinations to qualify. But in the novel, one of the two was by sniper rifle, the target being—in what perhaps seemed an ironic honor—Japanese, a cryptographer working on the 40th floor of Rockefeller Center in New York. 007 would again use a sniper rifle in the later Fleming short stories "For Your Eyes Only" and "The Living Daylights." Versions of these two scenes appeared in their eponymous Bond films as well.

The real avatar of Golgo in fiction, however, is not to be found in Ian Fleming, but Frederick Forsyth, whose *The Day of the Jackal* is so *Golgo*-esque, one might be tempted to cite it as an influence on the manga; except for the fact any influence could only have been the other way around, as it was first published in August 1971. Forsyth's freelance assassin—and the excellent 1973 film version played by Edward Fox—is a sniper who is arrogant and all-knowing to his employers, and who plans to kill a major political figure with a single long-range shot to the head, for a huge fee to be paid to a Swiss bank account. Everything is there: the multiple disguises and false identities, the visit to the master gunsmith with his clandestine workshop (as a parting gift, it will be here revealed that the guy with the black vest and glasses who makes guns for Golgo is named "Dave"*), the brief affair with the lonely foreign woman that ends badly for one of the two involved, the meticulous historical background behind the job, and as much attention given to the motives of the supporting characters as the assassin himself. If you like this sort of thing at all—and after 13 volumes, you had better—then run, do not walk; but remember, Saito did it first.

Adventure Cobra and heap big medicine of *Blackjack*. Under the title *The Professional: Golgo 13*, it's currently available on DVD from Urban Vision (who also carry the later OAV by the same team, *Golgo 13: Queen Bee*).

Considering the spare, workmanlike style associated with the *Golgo 13* manga, Dezaki and Sugino's expressionism at first seemed a strange choice. But only at first. I don't know if either one of them are Catholic—I mean, statistically, *someone* in anime has to be, right?—but there's something of Scorsese in them. Their characters burn, the old-fashioned meaning of *moé*, with passion, sorrow, and sin. Drawing on elements of several of the *Golgo 13* manga stories (including three from this edition, "Hydra," "Gravestone in Sicily," and "Far from an Era"), Dezaki gives a crazed, wild take on the character where Golgo's stone cold persona, far from offering a surgical application of death, serves instead as a pillar around which vengeance can rage and whip, until it smashes itself and all its wake against it.

Just the thing you want your teenager to see. At the show was a flyer; Toren was selling off his anime collection—in fact, all his worldly goods—to finance the fateful all-or-nothing trip to Japan where he would make the connections that would become the foundation of Studio Proteus (as described years later in a passage within Gainax president Yasuhiro Takeda's *The Notenki Memoirs*). And a tiny share of his stake I'm proud to say was mine, as it was I who bought his copy of *Golgo 13*. Already I was reviewing it and taking notes. No more Old Milwaukee for this kid; from now on, it was going to be strictly Camus Napoleon—you know, like they drank in *Golgo*. When I made my own first trip to Japan that next year, I likewise decided to start smoking the same brand Duke did—Parliaments. Since, as I discovered, only girls smoked them in the U.S. at the time, they made you seem caring and sensitive. These boasts would later lead Hiroyuki Yamaga to sensibly remark (Jan-Scott Frazier once called him the Bright Noa of Gainax), "I must say, you don't seem to have picked up any good habits from anime."

So, um, yeah, twenty years have passed, *iya da iya da*. And in merciful closure, I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Fukuda once again, as well as Shogakukan and Saito-Pro, for allowing me to adapt their stories in my own way. I am also grateful to translators Priscilla Yim and Kenichiro Yagi, letterer Mark McMurray (essential!) and designer Yukiko Whitley, and certainly also to Rika Inouye, Alvin Lu, and Masumi Washington. Most especially I thank and apologize to Yuki Murashige, for whom I caused many difficulties in the course of this production. If I cannot say, as did Kunio Suzuki, that *Golgo 13* was the textbook of my life, it was at least, perhaps more fittingly for me, the crib sheet.

And, thank you for reading the VIZ Signature edition of *Golgo 13*. You now understand manga a bit better than the rest. This is the real stuff, read now by three generations of ordinary people in Japan, surviving 40 years without fads, without story arcs, without tie-ins, without collectible cards, without TV series starring idol singers, without any of that good shit. Oh, and without big eyes, either. In fact it's so funny how people always look at Golgo, and never ask why he doesn't look Japanese.

*No, really. Dave McCartney, to be exact, as in the former Beatle. And much like Paul, we first see Dave's solo career in 1971, when he met Golgo (Story #37, "At Pin-Hole!"). Huh-huh-huh, the last word of this series is "hole."

noted for the debut of Hugo Pratt's *Corto Maltese*). Hisao Kato writes in 1976 of the character: "Soon after the strip's inception, Golgo 13 became the new kind of hero—cool, cruel, nihilistic—and widely imitated by other comic artists," and of its creator, "Saito is widely regarded as the artist who gave fresh impetus to the Japanese comic strip in the 1960s. His work, which has influenced a whole new generation of Japanese cartoonists (Takeshi Kanda, Yuzuro Saito, Fumiyasu Ishikawa, Saburo Takemoto, to name a few) is representative of contemporary Japanese comic art, with its emphasis on speed, thrills, and sex."

But with all that, only a few panels of the story were reproduced, and I would not encounter Golgo again until I was 15. Like Jean-Claude Van Damme, that year had double impact, as it was then I came to both read the manga and see the anime for the first time. Hardcore American *Golgo* fans (it is difficult to imagine there are any *casual* ones) may know of the four-volume English-language edition of *Golgo 13* that Saito's own Leed Publishing put out in 1986. This was just before translated manga began to be published on a regular basis in the U.S., which made any such release a special event, but the Leed editions were especially handsome, combining the best Japanese production qualities (the dust jackets to which Mr. Fukuda refers) with American (oversize pages, slick, bright paper). This Leed edition, although regrettably limited to four volumes (entitled *Into the Wolves' Lair*, *Galinpero*, *Ice Lake Hit*, and *The Ivory Connection*), was the most substantial release of the series until the VIZ Signature edition twenty years later.

1986 was also the year of the greatest anime convention program ever—all the more remarkable for the fact there *were* no anime conventions then; what you had to do was take a gaming or SF con hostage and inflict the otaku version of Stockholm Syndrome. That is precisely what Toren Smith did that year at San Jose, Calif.'s BayCon '86. In terms of personal accomplishment, initiative, and most importantly, standards, Toren, through his company Studio Proteus, was perhaps the single most influential *individual* during the first fifteen years of regular manga publishing in the U.S. The SP logo was on practically every manga that Eclipse, Dark Horse, and, ahem, Fantagraphics released during that period (and as that logo was upon them, even Fantagraphics' porno manga looked sharp and elegant).

But even before Toren Smith began that career, he had already been a tremendous influence on the American anime fan scene through the programs he helped organize at BayCon (and he would later help to bring about AnimeCon '91, the direct ancestor of today's Anime Expo). More than anyone else previously, Toren understood the power of presentation and the need to apply it to anime, giving it the treatment of a film festival. At exactly the right moment, he helped to bring the larger world of anime to a generation that had just watched *Robotech* on TV and was eager to discover the true breadth of the medium. At BayCon '86, the anime room was not merely on the schedule; it was on a TV right outside the dealers' room, playing a continuous loop Toren had made of clips for all the shows playing, complete with title cards making you want to double-check the showtimes of this movie called *The Castle of Cagliostro* or that one called *Macross: Do You Remember Love*? As a companion to the three-day, 24-hour programming, Toren oversaw an offset-printed program book with plot descriptions (subtitled anime were then quite rare) and half-tone illustrations. It was done with desktop publishing on a Mac, then a new approach, and looked state-of-the art, and in an age before the Web it became both a totem and a reference.

And of course, Toren being conscientious, and me (like Alex) only 15, the adults-only *Golgo 13* anime film was scheduled for three in the morning. This was the first time I had stayed overnight at a convention, sharing the room expense with two high school friends, and, having grabbed a little sleep beforehand, I tiptoed out stealthily at the appointed hour with a crafty can of Old Milwaukee in hand (ganking alcohol from con parties is a pleasure of youth) and stole into the screening room. Neither the article in Vol. 07's File 13, nor the interview in Vol. 11's, both of which discussed the live-action *Golgo* films, so much as made mention of the 1983 anime version; even Mr. Fukuda, when I brought it up said, "Oh yeah—that was the one with the CG." But it's a mind-blower, made by the team of director Osamu Dezaki and character designer Akio Sugino, who had previously adapted the classic manga *Ashita no Joe* and *The Rose of Versailles,* and who would also do the psych-out SF of *Space*